

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
APRIL 17, 1997**

PROJECTS REVIEWED

Convened: 8:00 AM

Seattle Center:

Intiman Theater at the Intiman Playhouse, Seattle Center

Mercer Corridor Planning

West Police Precinct/911

DISCUSSION

Cultural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan

Design Review Round Table Discussion with Architects and Developers

Design Review Round Table Discussion with Design Review Board Members

CITY UPDATE

Seattle Public Library

Adjourned: 6:30 PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Barbara Swift, Chair

Moe Batra

Carolyn Darwish

Gail Dubrow

Gerald Hansmire

Jon Layzer

Rick Sundberg

STAFF PRESENT

Marcia Wagoner

Vanessa Murdock

Michael Read

041797.1 Project: **INTIMAN THEATER AT THE INTIMAN PLAYHOUSE AT
SEATTLE CENTER
MERCER CORRIDOR PLANNING**

Phase: Pre-Design

Presenters: Dave Buchan, Seattle Center
Jerry Ernst, TRA
Robert Schneider, Bumgardner Architects
Paul Kosteniuk, Intiman Theater
Jim Loder, Intiman Theater

Time: 1 hour (0.3%)

The Intiman Theater at the Intiman Playhouse at Seattle Center has begun planning and preliminary design for an expansion of the facility. Concurrently, Seattle Center is undertaking a planning effort for the Mercer Corridor (from Warren Ave N to 5th Ave N) in order to provide guidelines for future development and redevelopment along the Mercer edge of Seattle Center.

Mercer Corridor Planning

The Seattle Center and Kreielsheimer Foundation are co-funding a study on the Mercer Corridor, to be initiated by an intensive design charrette in mid May. The disciplines of landscape architecture, architecture, urban design, graphic design and lighting design will be represented. The charrette participants will later reconvene to prepare a recommended conceptual framework for the corridor to present to the Seattle Center oversight committee.

Mercer Corridor Discussion

- Swift:** The limit of the focus area is tight. I would recommend you include the edges that extend the study area in the north/south direction.
- Buchan:** We have spoken about including the parking in the study area.
- Swift:** If you are talking about a corridor, I think you really want to reach out beyond the street itself.
- Ernst:** That is a good point, and one the charrette team will take into consideration.
- Dubrow:** I would recommend using base maps that are larger than the corridor, to provide a sense of context.
- Hansmire:** Seattle Center has a number of portals on Mercer and around the edge of the campus. Responding to these will be critical in developing a strong concept for the corridor.
- Layzer:** Does the empty lot across Mercer from the Intiman still figure into this study?
- Buchan:** Yes, it is the Kreielsheimer site.
- Dubrow:** It is always a delicate balancing act to get the right mix of participants at a charrette. I would encourage you to include a visual art planner - someone with experience in coordinating and planning visual art pieces. The Seattle Arts Commission would probably be able to recommend someone.

- Swift:** I am curious about your vision for the conceptual framework you intend to develop.
- Buchan:** We really want to leave it open to the design team. At the Seattle Center we have spoken about the lack of integration between the theater buildings. There is a great opportunity to use lighting in a theatrical manner that would signal the theater district.
- Ernst:** Mercer is currently a one sided street - it is more of an edge than an activity zone. There is a lot of pavement and the north side of the street is frankly unattractive. The corridor needs the pieces to be pulled together without looking homogenous. I think the way to get there is through a variety of approaches. I expect some provocative ideas to come out of the charrette.
- Dubrow:** My gut reaction is that it needs a common identity, however maybe the question is less about identity and more about vitality. Setting the priority will be very important before setting the design team to work.
- Buchan:** An important aspect in the corridor is the fire corridor between the Bagely Wright and the Intiman. It must be maintained, however currently it is a troubled space and ripe for consideration.
- Wagoner:** What is your time frame for the Mercer Corridor improvements?
- Buchan:** The improvements will be incremental, as they will occur in conjunction with individual renovation projects.
- Wagoner:** Will this study address the timing issues?
- Ernst:** We will have to take the incremental nature of the implementation into consideration as well as the funding issues.
- ACTION:** **The Commission commends the Seattle Center for undertaking the Mercer Corridor study, specifically supporting the idea of a smaller focused design team to address the concept for a later presentation to stakeholders. The Commission offers the following suggestions in regards to the study:**
- **consider the larger context of the Seattle Center,**
 - **address the portals to the campus along Mercer Street and the north south routes that bring people to the campus,**
 - **include a visual arts planner on the design team, and**
 - **continue to keep in mind other adjacent east/west connections in the area.**

Intiman Theater at the Intiman Playhouse Expansion

The Intiman Playhouse facility sits in the northwest quadrant of the Seattle Center campus, facing Mercer street. The Bagely Wright Theater lies to the west and the exhibition hall to the east. The Kobe Bell sits just east of the southeast corner of the building. The building is oriented in a north south direction. Moving from Mercer Street through the building one encounters first an outdoor court, a lobby, the house and the support services are located at the back of the house. The expansion and renovation of the facility calls for a renovation of the lobby and an expansion of the back of the house functions. Currently the Intiman Theater must rely on outside services and

facilities for scenery production and rehearsal spaces. After the expansion, these functions will be housed in the theater. The administrative and support functions will be stacked at the back of the house, in a stepped manner. The expansion will also create a more formal backdrop for the Kobe Bell.

Intiman Discussion

Dubrow: Given your tight site constraints, is there any way to make the scene shop functions more visible, so people can observe the scenery production activity?

Schneider: Many productions are a surprise and part of the anticipation of the opening is the mystery surrounding the scenery. We are thinking about natural light systems that would allow natural light to penetrate the scenery production area and rehearsal space.

Swift: Perhaps instead of a full view window, you could have a teaser glimpse of the scene shop area. Given your constraints, I think you have developed a healthy back of the building. You have very successfully solved the street intersection issue as well as that of the containment of the Kobe Bell. Your design as proposed resolves a lot of site design issues. In the past, the Design Commission has had serious concerns regarding the response of individual projects to the larger Seattle Center campus. I think your initial concept responds well to the larger context of the campus.

Schneider: We looked at the diagonal sight line from the Bagely Wright to the International Fountain, and wanted to be sure we preserved it. The strong backdrop to the Kobe Bell is an opportunity for an additional feature, such as a water wall, although that is not in our budget. The stacking of the functions at the back of the house allow for skylights in a variety of spaces.

Dubrow: Are there any issues you anticipate arising in the future that we should be aware of at this point?

Kosteniuk: We will have to follow whatever recommendations come out of the Mercer Corridor study.

Hansmire: I would agree that the turn around/drop off area could be better handled.

ACTION: **The Commission recommends approval of the pre-design direction, supporting the footprint of the proposed additions, particularly in relation to the Kobe Bell. The Commission appreciates the planning and urban design issues taken into consideration and strongly supports the comprehensive development and resolution of site and street relationships to the front and back door of the theater. The Commission looks forward to further discussion regarding the animation of the facility either dramatically, through exposed activity or sculpturally, through the articulation of the building.**

041797.2 Project: **WEST POLICE PRECINCT / 911**
 Phase: Design Development
 Presenters: Paul Berry, Executive Services Department
 Ed Weinstein, Weinstein Copeland Architects
 Karen Kiest, Murase Associates
 Time: 1 hour (0.3%)

The West Precinct / 911 Facility will be located on the block bounded by Virginia and Lenora Streets and 8th and 9th Avenues. The facility will house the West police precinct, the 911 communications center that serves the entire city, a neighborhood service center and the Magistrate's office. The design of the building strives to meet the functional needs of each constituent while presenting a friendly facade to the surrounding neighborhood. Functionally, the precinct is very introverted. The police need to be in a secure facility and want to be able to get away from the stress of the street. From a philosophical point of view, however, in terms of community presence and community policing, the precinct wants to be extroverted. By nature it is introverted, yet it wants to appear extroverted -to look available, welcoming and provide security to the street at night time. The communications center by contrast has significant extroverted functional qualities, but operationally needs to be very introverted. These needs have been accommodated in the following manner. The neighborhood service center will front the street along Virginia, with the Sally Port functions of the west precinct located behind the neighborhood service center at the buildings interior. The Communications center functions will be located along Virginia Street on the second level. The Virginia Street facade will be virtually transparent at the street level, becoming less open at the second level. The 8th Avenue facade is the inverse; a masonry wall at the ground level behind which will be parked the precinct vehicles, opening up to a more transparent facade at the second story. The masonry wall will be a backdrop for a layered planting treatment. The public entry to the facility will be at the corner of 8th Avenue and Virginia where the building cedes to a gently terraced plaza.

Since last before the Commission, the project has redesigned the scheme to come within the square footage specified by the original program.

For additional information, please refer to the Design Commission minutes of March 7, 1996

Discussion

Dubrow: The public art piece is not in a public location. Can you explain your rationale for that decision?

Berry: The artist does have concepts for the lobby that will be visible from the street through the glass.

Weinstein: The artist, Elizabeth Connor, wants to work in the landscape as well as in the lobby. She had spoken about a time piece that relates to the passage of time in terms of the three police watches on the 24 hour clock.

- Berry:** The Seattle Arts Commission selected Ms. Connor prior to the selection of the architect for the project. She has been part of the design team from the very beginning.
- Batra:** Will the horse patrol be accommodated in this facility as well?
- Weinstein:** No, not at this facility.
- Berry:** We fought very hard to keep this facility solely for the West Police precinct and the 911 communications center. The more functions you combine in that facility, the greater the perceived distance between the precinct and the community.
- Layzer:** Where is the non vehicular access for the communications center staff?
- Weinstein:** The front door of the facility at 8th and Virginia, however, in our conversations with staff we learned that the majority of the staff arrive by car.
- Swift:** Your attempt to grapple with the transparency issue has been through a reasonable approach. You will need a strong maintenance program for your landscaping given the exposure. You will need ample soil to accomplish what you want done in terms of the layering of vegetation. Your attempt to marry the public activities in a facility that requires some very non public spaces is great.
- Weinstein:** The planting beds are 6 feet on native soil. The sidewalk is 12 feet wide.
- Dubrow:** You mentioned that the lighting along 8th Avenue from the second story will provide a sense of safety. Is that sense of safety backed up by eyes on the street, or only an impression of eyes on the street?
- Berry:** There will be times when people are not in the administrative offices.
- Weinstein:** We are trying to convey a sense of security by suggesting that people are in the facility and eyes are on the street, albeit that will not be 24 hours a day.
- Dubrow:** Are there some other functions that could be located above 8th Avenue that would provide more eyes on the street than the administrative functions will provide.
- Berry:** There really aren't any functional areas that would provide more surveillance.
- Darwish:** The street trees you are showing appear like a barricade to me.
- Kiest:** We are working with the City of Seattle street tree standards. The trees are intended to act as a softening element, I don't think they will appear to be a barricade.
- Berry:** Barricades are more often perceived at a lower level, below hip height.
- Layzer:** I believe the intent of the transparency requirement is to address the human scale of the pedestrian. I encourage you to think of landscaping in terms of a pedestrian walking along. Your design has three points of automobile access, without much mitigation for the pedestrian.
- Weinstein:** The security gate will have some grillwork, which will provide visual interest. The width of the entrance to the garage off 8th Avenue is determined by the sight triangle.
- Hansmire:** You have done an excellent job in handling a very difficult, interesting project. In addition, your presentation was very thorough and clear.

ACTION: The Commission recommends approval of design development drawings as presented, strongly endorsing the elegant solution to a complex design problem. The Commission suggests the following be considered in the refinement of the design:

- maintaining a public open space on Virginia Street,
- the appearance of safety along 8th Avenue without actual surveillance, and
- the inclusion of some flowering plants in the landscape.

041797.3

CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Discussion

Ellen Kissman, Office of Management & Planning

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Ellen Kissman briefed the Commission on the drafting of the Cultural Element of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, "Toward a Sustainable Seattle". The Office of Management and Planning held three focus groups in the fall and four public workshops in February to solicit public ideas on what should be addressed in the cultural resources element. Ms. Kissman encouraged Commissioners to comment as a group or as individuals on the draft by the end of April. Commissioners pointed to the growing number of public/private partnerships that are being entered by the City to develop, build and operate public facilities.

The Commission understands cultural resources to include activities as well as physical facilities. Fostering and funding activities that generate a vital cultural community are essential to any commitment to the preservation of cultural resources. The Commission suggests setting strong guidelines to protect current resources and to ensure that future facilities are designed to the same standard as that of current public facilities. These guidelines could be included in either the cultural resource element, or elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioners underline the need to protect and nurture Seattle's cultural resources without institutionalizing them. Furthermore, the Commission encourages an emphasis on diversity rather than commonality.

041797.4

**DESIGN REVIEW ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION WITH
ARCHITECTS AND DEVELOPERS**

Discussion

Time: 2 hour (N/C)

Several architects and developers who have been through Design Review met with the Commission to discuss the Design Review process. The Design Commission has been asked by City Council to evaluate the three year old program. To date, the Commission has been gathering information on the program, primarily from participants in the process. Comments made at the round table will be incorporated in the final report by the Commission to City Council.

041797.5

SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Discussion

Craig Buthod, City Librarian (Acting)

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Acting City Librarian Craig Buthod briefed the Commission on the Library's effort to build a new central library and improve neighborhood facilities. A number of public meetings have been held to help determine a location. Two sites are currently under consideration; the block bounded by 1st and 2nd Avenues and Pike and Pine Streets (preferred location) and the block bound by 4th and 5th Avenues and Stewart and Virginia Streets. The complete capitol program is approximately \$200 million which includes \$45 million for neighborhood branches. The Library has requested to appear on the earliest possible ballot date.

The Commission looks forward to further discussions on the potential for a new civic facility in the downtown and offers to assist the Library in future design decisions.

041797.6

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. MINUTES OF APRIL 3 1997 Approved as amended.
- B. CONSULTANT SELECTION REQUESTS Batra and Sundberg will serve for the Fire Station upgrade/renovation projects.
- C. WEST LAKE UNION CORRIDOR PUBLIC MEETING Wednesday, April 30, 1997
4:30 - 7:00 PM, Latitude 47 Restaurant 1232 Westlake Avenue North.

- D. CONSULTANT SELECTION REPORT Darwish reported on the consultant selection process for the Aquarium exhibit.
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041797.7

**DESIGN REVIEW ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION WITH
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Discussion

Time: 1.5 hour (N/C)

Several Design Review Board members met with the Commission to discuss the Design Review process. The Design Commission has been asked by City Council to evaluate the three year old program. To date, the Commission has been gathering information on the program, primarily from participants in the process. Comments made at the round table will be incorporated in the final report by the Commission to City Council.